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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CONAKRY 000083

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [UN](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: UN BRINGS IN FORMER HAITIAN PM AS DIALOGUE  
FACILITATOR

REF: CONAKRY 0078

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

11. (S) SUMMARY. Gerard Latortue, a former prime minister of Haiti, has been in Conakry for three weeks on an official United Nations Mission to encourage dialogue. Despite a professed close friendship with the Guinean PM, Latortue believes that Kouyate has failed to do his job, and is quickly losing any political capital he has left. Latortue also saw the president who he described as engaged and active, but physically incapacitated. Latortue's initial visit seems to be more of a fact finding mission. He expects to be asked to return as early as July, but is unclear as to what role he might play. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) Officially representing the United Nations, Gerard Latortue is nearing the end of a three-week mission aimed at helping to facilitate political dialogue in Guinea. Latortue was prime minister of Haiti from March 2004 to June 2006. Ambassador Carter and Poloff met with Latortue on April 2. Poloff also met with him separately on March 28 and again on April 6.

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BIO NOTES  
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13. (C) Gerard Latortue (born 06/19/34) was born in Haiti, but obtained U.S. citizenship in March 2008. He was appointed prime minister of Haiti and head of a new provisional government in March 2004 following a coup d'etat that forced former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide into exile. According to Latortue, he was appointed specifically to manage Haiti's transition period and to organize successful legislative and presidential elections. Latortue told Poloff that he never had any political ambitions to be president and when his job was finished, he stepped down as planned. Prior to his PM appointment, Latortue worked for more than 20 years with the UN. Since leaving Haiti, Latortue has worked as an international consultant. Latortue lives with his American citizen wife in Boca Raton, Florida. They have three grown daughters who are also American citizens.

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OLD FRIENDS WITH KOUYATE  
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14. (C) Latortue told Ambassador and Poloff that he has known Prime Minister Lansana Kouyate for several years, through their mutual employment with the United Nations, and considers him a friend. He said that he had actually visited

with Kouyate in Geneva a few months after the PM's appointment. Latortue said that Kouyate had asked him for advice as to how to carry out his new role. "I told him that the most important thing is for him to not have any personal political ambitions and to maintain a close working relationship with the president," Latortue said. He later told Poloff that it is impossible to succeed as PM when a president still holds power if one is unable to effectively negotiate the necessarily delicate political balance.

15. (SBU) When asked about his current mission in Guinea, Latortue said that Kouyate personally asked him to come and help him out as a consultant some months ago. However, Latortue said it was actually the United Nations who officially requested his assistance and financed his trip.

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KOUYATE HAS FAILED  
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16. (S) Despite his friendly relationship with Kouyate, Latortue told Poloff that he was disappointed in the Guinean PM because he had failed to fulfill his mandate. "He let his personal ambitions get in the way," Latortue said. Latortue's first meeting in country was with Kouyate, but he then met with a wide range of Guinea's key political actors including the president's office, the president of the National Assembly, the president of the Supreme Court, the head of the Economic and Social Council, the labor unions, political parties, civil society, and the religious community. After talking to these various actors, Latortue's conclusion was that Kouyate has made a series of errors that have handicapped his administration and increased the

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likelihood that he will be fired. By the time Poloff saw him for the third time, Latortue was very worried about Guinea's current political situation and feared a possible outbreak of violence before his April 11 departure.

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LATORTUE'S TEN COMMANDMENTS  
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17. (U) On April 7, the Lynx newspaper, a satirical weekly publication, printed an article detailing what it called "Latortue's Ten Commandments." The article was later picked up by internet news site Aminata.com. According to the article, Latortue outlined ten directives to the Guinean Government, as follows:

- The PM must not have political ambitions.
- The PM may not use his office for influence peddling.
- The PM cannot succeed without the confidence of the president.
- The PM cannot be bigger than the president.
- The government should not use public money for international lobbying.
- A transitional PM should avoid unnecessary travel.
- There are trips that do not require the participation of a member of the government since an expert or technician would suffice.
- A transitional PM should bring in money, not spend it.
- A PM should not invent conspiracies. He must not worry anyone.
- The agreement between the unions and the government has not legal value. It's value is moral and political. In any circumstance, it cannot violate the Constitution.
- The PM should avoid getting involved in the awarding of contracts. It is better to lose time with committees formed for this purpose, or other existing structures, than to lose the money when it falls into other pockets.

18. (SBU) Poloff called Latortue on April 9 to ask about the

article. Latortue laughed and said "it is all a big joke." According to him, he had mentioned these items as being part of his own personal mandate when he was prime minister of Haiti. Latortue said that the journalists naturally interpreted it as a statement about Guinea because many of the "commandments" could be applied to the current situation. He said that the article was intended as political satire and that no one should take it seriously.

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PM'S DISMISSAL IMMINENT  
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¶9. (S) According to Latortue, the president is on the verge of firing Kouyate and appointing a new prime minister. Poloff said that people have been talking about this possibility for months, but that nothing has happened so far. Latortue said he had heard from several of his contacts that the momentum for getting rid of Kouyate is building, and that the cancellation of the contracts with Libya (reftel) may have been a "testing of the waters."

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PRESIDENT IS PHYSICALLY ILL, BUT STILL ACTIVE  
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¶10. (S) When Poloff saw Latortue on April 6, the former PM said that he had seen President Conte on April 9. When asked about the president's health, Latortue said that Conte was fully engaged and active, but that he is physically incapacitated from the waist down. The former PM specifically mentioned that Conte could not stand or walk without assistance. He also said that he chatted briefly with one of the president's physicians who said Conte was doing well on that particular day, but he sometimes falls in and out of diabetic comas. The doctor reportedly said that Conte could continue in his current state for ten days or ten years.

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COMMENT  
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¶11. (C) This initial visit seems to be more of a fact finding mission for Latortue. After his various meetings, he

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was not sure what role he could play, but said he is scheduled to report to the UN in New York to deliver his analysis. The former PM said he expects to be asked to return to Guinea for a follow-on mission, probably in July. Various contacts within civil society, the unions, and the political parties independently told Poloff that they are glad Latortue is here because they need an objective third party mediator that can help facilitate constructive dialogue.

¶12. (C) Although Latortue shrugged off his "ten commandments" as a big joke, he had repeatedly mentioned those same themes during his meetings with Poloff before the article was published. He may not have intended these ideas to be made public, but they likely represent the foundation of his analysis, at least with respect to Kouyate. END  
COMMENT.  
CARTER